



Annex 1: Exemptions to the National Local Growth Assurance Framework due to Covid-19

| Provision in the NLGAF | NLGAF Reference | Exemption |
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| 1. Publication of Accounts and Financial Information | “As a minimum, the LEP should publish on the website... an annual financial statement...” Paragraph 70. | Where the LEP is reliant on Local Authorities for the data in order to publish an annual financial statement and the time frame for LAs has been extended until November 30 2020, the LEP should publish the annual financial statement by the end of December 2020, if they have not already done so. |
| 2. Appointment Process for Board Members and Chairs | “The LEP should outline, or refer to, its appointment process for Board Members (public and private sector), Chairs and Deputy Chairs within the Local Assurance Framework. As part of this they should ensure that they advertise opportunities for private sector leaders to become a LEP Chair or private sector Board Member when vacancies emerge. They should advertise openly, on a variety of platforms to ensure that people across the business community have an opportunity to apply and consider the diversity requirements outlined in this Framework...” Paragraph 75-77 | Due to the current circumstances it is agreed that the board may need to extend or temporary appoint board members/chairs without needing to proceed to a full recruitment on the basis a full and open recruitment is conducted after these exceptional circumstances cease. This should be recorded in the LEPs board minutes and an email sent to the Area Lead, copying localgrowthassurance@communities.gov.uk so that the Unit has a record. We therefore propose to review extensions to term limits or temporary appointments in October 2020. |
| 3. Publication of Meeting and Agenda Items | “Each LEP must explain on an easily accessible part of their website the documentation they will routinely publish ...meeting agendas and papers to be published 5 clear working days before the meeting takes place; and minutes of board meetings to be published within 10 clear working days of the meeting taking place”. Paragraph 103 | The timeframes set out in paragraph 103 should still be adhered to where possible; however it is appreciated that during this unprecedented time there may be exceptional circumstances, such as staff illness, where it is not possible to adhere to the timeframes. We propose to review this in October 2020. |



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| 4. Link to Accountable Body accounts | “The LEP should provide a link to the Accountable Body accounts on their website. For LEPs limited by guarantee, a link to the accounts of the LEP for the financial year on the Companies House website should also be included in the financial statement and published on the website”. Paragraph 109 | We recognise that Local Authorities have been given an extension until November 30 2020 as to when financial audits are to be undertaken and that this may have a knock on effect to such provisions for LEPs. The link referred to in paragraph 109, should be updated once the Accountable Body has published its accounts and by end of December 2020 |
| 5. LEP Board composition – RBS Group employees | “The LEP Board must contain representatives from different parts of the community. In addition, at least two-thirds of the Board must be representatives from the private sector as defined by the National Accounts Sector Classification”. Paragraph 125 | Reliance on private/public sector definition as set by the National Accounts Sector Classification. There is a caveat already in place for HE/FE stating that they are classified as private sector. We propose extending this caveat to RBS group employees. |
| 6. LEP Board composition – private sector | “The LEP Board must contain representatives from different parts of the community. In addition, at least two-thirds of the Board must be representatives from the private sector as defined by the National Accounts Sector Classification”. Paragraph 125 | 2/3rd target: where due to the current circumstances a decision is made at board level not to hold open recruitment for private sector replacement board members, those board appointments can be recorded as vacant private sector positions and this will not affect the board representation statistics. The Board must, once this period of exceptional circumstances has passed, move to an open recruitment as soon as reasonably practicable. We propose to review this position on LEP Board composition in October 2020. |
| 7. LEP Board composition – SME and Diversity champions | “At least one member of the main LEP Board must be designated as a Small and Medium Enterprise (SME) Champion for the LEP. They should be clearly named on the LEP website. Their role is to champion SME businesses and their interests within the LEP and local community”. Paragraph 127 | Wherever possible roles such as SME Champions and Diversity Champions should be maintained. However, it is appreciated in the current circumstances where a board member may resign it may not be possible to reappoint these immediately and therefore there may be a delay until the post is filled. We propose to review this position on LEP Board composition in October 2020. |



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| 8. LEP Board composition – co-optees | “LEPs should have a Board which is a maximum of 20 people, with the option to co-opt an additional five Board members with specialist knowledge on a one year basis, unless there are exceptional circumstances”. Paragraph 128 | With board approval, co-optees can have a short extended term of longer than the one year stipulated. We propose to review this position on LEP Board composition in October 2020. |
| 9. LEP Board composition – Chair’s term | “To support the Chair in their role, all LEPs should appoint a Deputy Chair. The LEP should have a defined term limit of three years for the Chair and Deputy Chair, with an optional extension of three years. There is an option to extend for a further three years in exceptional circumstances if approved by the Board”. Paragraph 133 | We hold that the current circumstances are exceptional. Where the board wished to extend the term for Chairs and Deputy Chairs beyond nine years maximum individual LEPs should email localgrowthassurance@communities.gov.uk copying the Area Lead, for Unit to consent to the extend period. We propose to review this position on LEP Chair and Deputy Chair terms in October 2020. |
| 10. Scrutiny/Audit Arrangements | Full details in Paragraphs 152 – 159 | Depending on the Scrutiny/Audit timetable for each LEP these activities may be postponed due to the exceptional circumstances. Transparency, appropriate audit trails and scrutiny/audit are still important and the normal course should be followed where practicable to do so. We propose to review this position in October 2020. |
| 11. Annual General Meetings | “As part of their openness to the communities they serve, each LEP should openly advertise and hold an Annual General Meeting that is open to the public.” Paragraph 74 | Given that the SoS has announced that councils can hold public meetings remotely whilst maintaining access to the public, we recommend that LEPs follow suit for their AGMs and adhering to government’s instructions regarding public distancing until and if they change. |

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| <p>12. Delivery plans / Year end reports</p> | <p>“As part of the assurance monitoring process, each LEP is required to publish an annual report and delivery plan. The delivery plan and annual report should set out a well-developed understanding of the local economic evidence base to identify opportunities and obstacles to inclusive growth, prosperity and improved productivity. Government will work with LEPs to develop measures to report against in the plan and report. These will be considered as part of the annual assurance process. Delivery plans and annual reports should be published at the beginning of each financial year.” Paragraph 163</p> | <p><i>Strengthening LEPs</i> introduced delivery plans (inaugural plans were submitted last year) and year end reports, which were due to assess LEPs’ achievements against their delivery plans. LEPs’ resources may be better utilised in the current climate. We, therefore, propose to postpone the submission and publication of the documents to align with the Q1 data submission scheduled for August 2020.</p> |
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